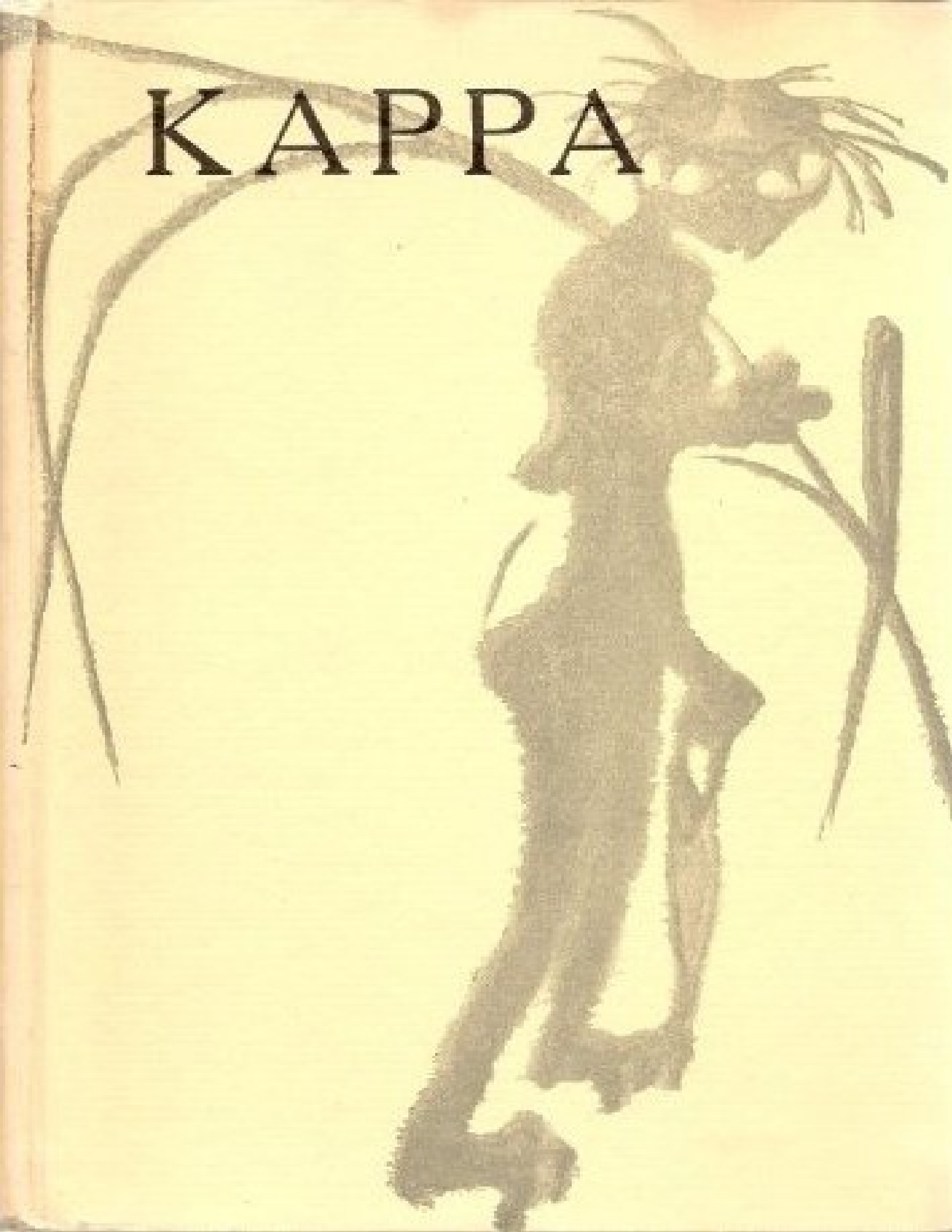


# KAPPA





RYUNOSUKE AKUTAGAWA IN 1927.

RYUNOSUKE AKUTAGAWA'S

**KAPPA**

*Translated from the Japanese by*

SEIICHI SHIOJIRI

*NEW EDITION (REVISED)*

THE HOKUSEIDO PRESS

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*To*  
*Mr. Harrison Collins*  
*and*  
*Mr. Roger Inglott*

*this little book is dedicated, in the hope  
that it will eventually find its way to these  
old friends who, I believe, will be glad to  
know that I have survived the war to bring  
the Kappas to the notice of the Occidental  
people.*

*19, Kurumamichi, Yasui,  
Uzumasa, Kyoto*

*1947, SEIICHI SHIOJIRI*

# NOTE TO THE NEW EDITION

I am grateful for the warm reception accorded this little book since it was first published in 1947. It went through three impressions in fifteen months, and a fourth was being expected when the publishers went out of business.

In preparing this new edition for my new publishers, I have tried to the best of my ability to improve on the original translation. But I am well aware that it still leaves much to be desired, especially in the eyes of the readers whose mother tongue is English. It is a great handicap to me that being a Japanese I have never lived among English-speaking people.

Dr. Tsunetō, who wrote the preface, is now President of the new Osaka University. Professor Collins, to whom this book is dedicated, has been found by the kappas at the University of Hawaii. He kindly read my manuscript in 1940, when he was a professor of English and American literature at the Hiroshima Bunrika University, and wrote me a highly encouraging letter, saying that it should be published promptly "in order that Occidental people too may enjoy an acquaintance with the kappas." It was this letter of his that enabled this book to find its publishers—after the war, of course, for in 1940 it was not the kind of stuff they cared for. I hope his "elephant" is behaving well.

My heartfelt thanks are due to Dr. Kyō Tsunetō, President of the Osaka University of Commerce, for writing a charming preface, to which, however, I am afraid I have not done justice in my translation. It is a great pleasure to me to open this book with *his* preface, not only because he is one of the noblest living minds of Japan, but because he was one of the best friends of the author of *Kappa*. I am also indebted to him for his good offices in getting Mrs. Akutagawa's permission to publish this translation.

1947



## 序

(Preface by Dr. Kyô Tsunetô)

芥川龍之介の構想力から生まれ出た「河童の國」が現實の世界でないことは、言ふまでもないけれど、それは謂はゆるユートピアの性格をもつものではない。

「河童の國」は、著者の世界觀なり、人生觀なりを反映させるためにゑがかれた現代社會のカリカツールである。それが河童を市民とする社會であるのは、河童といふ動物が著者の大好きな非現實的存在だつたからであらうと思ふ。

大正の初期のことであるが、京都帝大の法科の學生であつたところや、大學院の學生であつたところには、上京する機會があると、田端にあつた芥川の家——(残念なことに、今年の7月13日に空襲のために焼け失せてしまつた。)——泊めてもらつたものであつた。そしてよく二階の部屋で、腹這ひになつたままで、二人が紙ぎれにいたづらがきの繪をかきながら話し合つたものであるが、そんな時に芥川はしばしば河童のすがたをかいたものであつた。(ただし彼がこのんでゑがいたのは、希臘風の端麗な目鼻立ちの女性のプロフィールで

あつた。)——「これは傑作だらう。ぼくの自画像だよ」といつて、いささか得意になつて、墨がきの河童の繪を見せてくれたことがあつたのを記憶してゐる。

數日前、私の不在中に、鹽尻氏が「河童」の英譯の原稿を私の宅に持参して下さつた。昨夜、寝る前にそれを読みはじめたが、つい釣りとまれて、全體の三分の二ばかりを一氣によんでしまつたところ、睡魔の襲ふところとなつたが、夜明けに近いころ、なんだか河童らしい者の出て来る夢を見たやうな気がする。けさ起きてから、残りの部分を読み了へた次第であるが、原文をよむのとは違つた面白味のあることをつくづくと感じた。

はじめに「河童」の英譯を思ひ立つて、それに手を浴けられて以來、いま私の手もとにある原稿の出来るまで、鹽尻氏はなみなみならぬ苦心と努力をかさねられたものらしい。氏の譯文が英文としてどの程度にすぐれたものであるかといふことは、到底私の判斷し得ないところであるけれど、それでも、實に隅々までも行きとどいた心づかひをもつて、原文の一言一句をもおろそかにせず、しかも、原文の獨自のおもむきを巧みに傳へることに力をそそいだ譯しかたであるといふことは、おほよそ私にも見當がつくのである。

われわれ日本人は、今後、これまでに比べてより深く、よ

り充分に西洋文化のさまざまな成分を理解することに努めねばならぬと思ふが、それと共に、さまざまな分野における日本文化、ことに文藝的作品を歐米諸國の人々に紹介することによつて、もつと正確に日本といふものを理解してもらふことにも努めるべきであると思ふ。かやうな點から考へて、芥川龍之介の小説の一つが鹽尻氏によつて英譯され、出版されるやうになつたことは、まことによろこばしい。

芥川が自分で自分のたまの緒を断ち切つた昭和二年の夏は、丁度ことしの夏のやうに酷烈を極めた暑さの夏であつたが、鹽尻氏の譯された「河童」をよんで、亡友のおもかげを偲ぶところもちの切なるものがあり、その心持ちの消え去らぬうちにと、このつたない序文をしたためた次第である。

昭和21年8月18日夜

恒 藤 恭

### *Translation:*

The country of kappas, as described by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa in his *Kappa*, is of course a product of pure imagination, but it is not a community of Utopian romance. It is a caricature of modern Japanese society, intended to reflect the author's views of life and of the world. The reason why Akutagawa peopled his imaginary country with kappas was, I suppose, just because he was so fond of those animals of fancy.

I remember those days I spent with Akutagawa in the early part of the Taishō Era (1912-26), during my undergraduate and graduate

student years at the Law Department of the Imperial University of Kyoto. He lived then at Tabata, Tokyo, and whenever I went to that city I stayed at his house (which unfortunately was destroyed by fire caused by air raid on July 13 last year). We used to talk together in his straw-matted room upstairs, lying on our stomachs and scrawling idle sketches on pieces of waste paper. Many of these sketches of Akutagawa's were kappas, though more often I saw him drawing profiles of women with elegant Greek features. I also remember him once showing me a black and white picture of a kappa, saying with an air of not a little satisfaction: "A masterpiece, eh? This is my portrait."

A few days ago Mr. Shiojiri brought me during my absence the manuscript of his English translation of Kappa. I began to read it late last night, and found it so interesting that I went through more than two thirds of the whole story at a stretch. Then I fell asleep—and I think I had a dream just before daybreak in which I imagine I saw something that looked like a kappa. The remaining pages I finished this morning. I enjoyed it very much. It has new charm in its new dress of translation.

It seems that Mr. Shiojiri has devoted a great deal of time and labor to his work since he took it up years ago. How well he has done it I as a Japanese am of course unable to tell. But I think I may at least say that he has done it very conscientiously, exercising great care in the handling of every word or phrase of the original, and trying at the same time to reproduce its unique charm.

We Japanese must hereafter try to understand Western culture more thoroughly and more extensively than we have ever done. But it is also desirable that we should try to help Occidental people

understand Japan more correctly by introducing to them what has been achieved in various fields of Japanese culture, especially works of literary art. From this point of view it is a pleasure to see one of Akutagawa's novelettes translated into English and published. The heat of that summer of 1927 when Akutagawa ' cut off his own thread of life ' was as intense as it is this summer. Mr. Shiojiri's translation of Kappa has called up swarms of recollections of its author whose memory is so dear to me, and in this mood of retrospection I have scribbled down this brief preface.

August 18, 1946. KYO TSUNETO

# INTRODUCTORY NOTES

RYUNOSUKE AKUTAGAWA

THE KAPPA IN THE JAPANESE FOLKLORE

# RYUNOSUKE AKUTAGAWA

Ryūnosuke Akutagawa ranks among the greatest men of letters of modern Japan. He was an artist in the true sense of the word, his devotion to his work being sometimes compared with that of Flaubert. In fact, some of his writings are gems of perfect workmanship. But the beauty of his style can hardly be appreciated except in the language he used. If put into other tongues, his masterpieces would be no better than Hiroshige's color prints copied in oils.

Akutagawa was born in Tokyo on March 1, 1892. After finishing the course of the First High School in 1913, he studied English literature at the Tokyo Imperial University, from which he was graduated in 1916. The thesis he submitted for graduation was a study of William Morris. In the same year he wrote and published three short stories, *The Nose*, *The Imo-gruel* and *The Handkerchief*, which brought him immediate fame and launched him upon the brilliant activity of the next eleven years. He married Fumi Tsukamoto in 1918, and in the following year published his third and perhaps most important collection of short stories under the title of *The Puppet player*. He was now a leading figure in the literary circles of Japan, and successfully maintained his position for the rest of his life, which he cut short on July 24, 1927, at Tabata, Tokyo, by taking a dose of veronal.

What made him prefer death no one knows for certain except Akutagawa himself. He says that it was "a vague fear," which again

does not seem to clarify the matter at all. But let us leave it at that. Suffice it to say here that he had made up his mind to quit this world and was calmly "playing with death," as he put it, when he wrote the last six works on the following list, including *Kappa*.

Some of his important works are: The Rashōmon (1915); The Nose, The Imo-gruel, The Handkerchief (1916); The Inferno, The Death of a Christian, The Death of Bashō (1918) ; The General, In the Grove, Otomi's Chastity (1922); From Yasukichi's Note-books (1923); Travels in China, The Biography of Daidōji (1925); The Death of Genkaku, The Mirage, *Kappa*, The Man of the West, The Cog-wheel, A Fool's Life (1927).

Two complete collections of his works have been published since his death, one in eight volumes and the other in ten volumes.



# THE KAPPA IN THE JAPANESE FOLKLORE

The *kappa* is a fabulous creature of the rivers, ponds, lakes and the sea, and is supposed to be more or less like a child about three to ten years old. Popular imagination has given him many strange characteristics, of which the most remarkable is what is called the *sara* (Japanese for *dish*) of his head. It is not a movable article as the word would suggest, but a small cavity or hollow on top of the skull. When this *dish* is filled with water, the monster is supposed to be so powerful that he can drag men and horses into the water. I remember when I was a boy mother often telling me not to swim in deep waters lest I should be caught by a kappa and get my liver (which vaguely meant the most important internal organ) picked out through the anus.

The kappa is very widely known in Japan. Literally the word means "river-child." It has many other names of the same meaning, such as *kawatarō*, *kawako*, *kawarakozō*, etc. In the Iwami Province where I was born he is called *enkō*. Evidently this name comes from the old popular belief that he looks like a monkey, for the word *enkō* more usually means "monkey." *Suiko*, or "water-tiger," is a literary name taken from an old Chinese book.

There are many old Japanese books containing articles or pictures of the kappa, from some of which the following is quoted:

....Often he (the kappa) bewitches men and women. Some people

say that he is the transformation of a big tortoise. Looks like a child with an ugly face ....His skin is greenish yellow, and at the top of his head is a small cavity containing water. This water gives him great physical strength— If you meet with a kappa, deal him a hard blow on the head and drive out the water kept there, and he will fall helpless. It is said that a great number of kappas are found in the Kyūshū provinces, where they are believed to be the transformations of old otters.

—*Honchō Shokukan*, a book of common articles of food, published 1695.

Looks like a monkey, with a long nose and round eyes. Very powerful when he has water in his *dish*, or the clam-shell-shaped cavity on top of his head. The color is grey, with a touch of greenish yellow. Wears a shell and keeps his limbs in it like a tortoise, but when he sticks them out he looks like man. His hands and feet are webbed, each with five fingers or toes. Very fishy-smelling.

—*Hone Kibun*, a book of animals, vegetables and minerals, published c. 1800.

....Looks like a child about ten years old. Goes naked. Walks erect and speaks human language. The top of his short-haired head is concave and holds a small quantity of water. Lives in the water, and comes out in the evening to steal melons, egg-apples and other farm

products. Likes wrestling, and challenges every man or woman he comes across to a contest of strength.... When you wrestle with a kappa, shake your head violently up and down several times. He will do the same and lose every drop of water on top of his head, and will soon be overcome. But until he has lost the water he is stronger than the strongest man. Moreover, he can withdraw one arm into his chest and stretch out the other twice its usual length. This peculiarity, coupled with the slipperiness of his skin, makes him all the more difficult to deal with. Sometimes he drags even horses and cows into the water and sucks their blood through their anuses. One must be careful when crossing a stream.

—*Wakan Sansai Zue*, an encyclopedia published c. 1700.

....Has a long-haired head and a face very much like a tiger's. As big as a badger... . Afraid of monkeys .... The young are spit forth, or born from the mother's mouth. No edged tool can cut him, a sharpened hemp stick being the only effective weapon against him. ...Likes to wrestle with children.... A dose of powdered bark of the Chinese anise taken with water is a good cure for the insanity that often results from wrestling with a kappa.... Keeps water in a hollow on the triangular top of his head, his strength being lessened with the loss of the water. Steals cucumbers and musk-melons to eat them, and sometimes horses and cows to ride them. These animals are of no use afterwards. Often casts a spell on women and rapes them.. ..Drags men and women into the water and, thrusting his hand in through their anuses, picks out their livers....

—*Wakun no Shiori*, a dictionary published 1805.

Dear Mr. Kimpei Urayama,

I beg to present you with a kappa caught off the coast of Mito on June I. It measures more than three feet in length and weighs about a hundred pounds. I have never seen such a big one.... There were noisy cries in the sea, like those of babies. The fishermen cast their net and caught many kappas in it. But they all nimbly made their escape except this one, which was knocked down with a pole.... When it fell it broke wind, and the stench was so offensive that the fishermen became ill afterwards.... It seems to have no bones at all. Its anus consists of three openings, only a hissing sound being produced when the gas is emitted....

Yours sincerely,

Gompeiji.

—*Shokusanjin*, 1768-1829, a humorist..

Mr. Kawai of Nagoya was a man of large build and great strength. In the early hours of July the 3rd, the 3rd year of Hōreki (1753), when he was walking along the Oise, he came upon a little boy wearing a brown hemp garment and a black obi (girdle), with no hair at the top center of his head. Mr. Kawai asked him where he was going, and was told that he was on his way from the Camellia Grove

on the upper stream to the water-mill.

Mr. Kawai walked on, when suddenly the little boy seized his obi and pulled him back. " So you are that damned *kawakozō* (river-child) that has done so much harm to innocent people here," said Mr. Kawai. " I would smash your brains out if I were not under a vow not to destroy life."

The *kawakozō* was rightened, and hurriedly jumped into the river and was gone. After a while, however, when Mr. Kawai was seated on the bank puffing away at his pipe, the *kawakozō* \_stole out of the water and approached him again.

Mr. Kawai saw him, and in an angry voice told him to be gone. The *kawakozō* said, as he jumped back into the river, that he had never met with such a formidable person before.

On his way home Mr. Kawai told this story to Mr. Yamaoka, who in turn told it to me in July, the 9th year of Meiwa (1772).

—*Wakun no Shiori*.

In the Tenshō Era (1573-92) there lived in the village of Haneba, Shinano Province, a man whose name was Shiba Kawachi. One day he left his horse grazing alone on the bank of the Tenryū. Presently a kappa took the tether and tried to drag the horse into the river. But the animal would not move an inch. It seemed determined to have its own way. So the kappa wound the rope tightly round his waist and pulled with all his might, until at sunset the horse made up its mind to put an end to the tug of war, and, before the kappa had time to

disentangle himself from the rope, ran back to the stable.

The people of the house and their neighbors rushed upon the kappa and bound him hand and foot to a stable post. But the master of the house, who felt pity for the luckless little monster, unbound the rope and let him go. And from time to time after that he found some fresh-water fish at the door of his house, probably brought by the grateful kappa during the night.

—*Shinano Kidan*, Folklore of the Shinano Province, published c. 1830.

A certain old family in Sayo District, Himeji, sells a medicine for broken bones prepared by a secret formula. It is known as the "kappa's remedy" and is highly prized for its virtues. According to the local tradition, the formula was first learned from a kappa in the Mei Era (1704-1711) by one of the ancestors of the family.

One late summer day, when the heat was unbearable in the stable, his horse was taken to the bank of a stream and tied to a little willow in the shade of a tree. But soon the horse ran back to the stable. A servant went to see what had happened, and found something like a monkey squatting in a corner, with the tether round its waist. He dragged it out and bound it to a persimmon tree. The top of its head was concave, and the concavity was surrounded by reddish-brown hair that looked like dry needles of a pine-tree. The people who gathered around agreed that it was a kappa and were loudly discussing what should be done with him, when the master of the house came.

He glared at the hateful little devil and declared that he would cut him to pieces to avenge the deaths of the villagers who had lost their lives in the river. Then he drew his sword and :hopped off his right arm. The kappa lamented his fate, and with tears running down his cheeks begged his life to be spared, swearing that he would never again do any harm to that family and the villagers. The samurai felt pity for him. It would not add anything to his credit to kill so mean a thing as a kappa. He would let him go, he said, if he would write an apology.

But the kappa did not know how to write, nor had he the hand to write with. He begged the samurai for mercy's sake to return his right arm. But what was the use of an arm that had been cut off? the samurai demanded. He would keep it as a souvenir. The kappa bowed again and again and begged him to give it back, saying that he would set it all right that night. The samurai was interested, and asked whether the kappa prepared the medicine for himself. The kappa replied that he did.

The samurai ordered the curious people away, and when he was alone with the kappa, he proposed to let him go with his right arm if he would tell him how the wonderful medicine was prepared. The kappa complied, and the formula has been handed down to this day as a family secret.

—*Saiyū Kembun Zuihitsu*, A Trip to Western Provinces.

There are numerous kappas around Kumamoto and Yatsushiro in the province of Higo, Kyūshū. But they never do any harm to the

people there.

Kiyomasa Katō, who was lord daimio of the province, and whose name is a household word in Japan, one day went fishing to a river, when one of his favorite pages was drowned by a kappa. The governor-general got very angry and ordered every kappa in his province to be destroyed.

Hundreds of Buddhist priests were called together to chant incantations to prevent the kappas from leaving the province. The streams were poisoned. Thousands of heated stones were thrown into the pools, and as many monkeys as could be found were brought from the mountains. For hot water robs the kappa of its strength, and while the monkey grows stronger at the sight of a kappa, the kappa cowers before a monkey just as the mouse does before a cat.

The kappas were hard pressed. They grew sick and dizzy. At last Kyūsenbō, the head of the nine thousand kappas, begged forgiveness through the priests, promising that they would never again do any harm to the people in that province. They were forgiven, and have since kept their word faithfully.

—*Honchō Zokugenshi*, Things Seen and Heard, published 1746.

In the era of Kan-ei (1624-1644) there lived in Kyūshū a samurai whose name was Hachizaemon. One day during his stay at Arima, he saw a kappa lying fast asleep on the bank of a pond, and without warning struck at it with his sword. He felt that the blow was



effective, but before he could make sure the kappa had vanished. He looked round in vain for the body, and returned to his town about a hundred miles away.

Three years passed, and on September 14th, the kappa called on Hachizaemon and challenged him to a duel, saying that he had recovered from the wound inflicted at Arima and come to settle the account. Hachizaemon welcomed him and led him into the garden. A fierce combat followed. Both fought well, the samurai with his favorite sword and the kappa with something like a young twig of a plum-tree. They fought more than five hours till about eight o'clock in the evening, and the issue was still doubtful. So they laid down their arms and parted, promising to fight it out the next day. The samurai's family and servants, who could not see the kappa, thought that he had gone crazy. But when he told them all about the strange duel, they were deeply impressed with his skill in swordsmanship and the sense of honor displayed by the kappa.

Next day the lord of the province came to see the fight. He put his men around the house to prevent the kappa from escaping. But the kappa did not show up, and the daimio returned to his castle displeased.

That night the kappa stole into Hachizaemon's bedroom and awoke him to bid him farewell. He had come all the way from Arima to avenge himself, but, he said, now that the lord daimio interfered, he had to give up the fight and go home.

The kappa could have delivered a blow on the sleeping samurai, but he was too proud to do so.

—*Shokusanjin*.

One day a kappa asked a pack-horse driver to give him a lift. When he got off, he refused to pay the fare, saying that the driver had given him an unnecessary pain by binding him too tightly to the horse. So the driver took the kappa to the court to get the dispute settled.

The judge wanted to know how much pain the kappa had suffered, and ordered the driver to bind the defendant just as tightly as he had bound him to the horse. The driver did as he was told. But the kappa insisted that he had been bound much more tightly. The honest driver grew angry and tightened the rope with a vengeance, until the kappa screamed with pain and begged to be unbound. The judge made him pay the money and let him go.

This last story was told by my friend Morinaga-san, who once asked me whether the kappa had a navel. At another time he asked a similar question about the frog. What on earth has a navel to do with us, one may ask, when the whole human race has gone crazy? But if men looked at each other's navel, instead of looking into each other's eyes, they would always find some way to settle their disputes amicably. For the navel never hates, nor loves, as the eyes do. It simply sits there on the peaceful belly, smiling philosophically.

I studied several kappas in old pictures. None had a navel. Then I came upon another picture in Mr. Hino's new book entitled "Kappa

Ascends to Heaven." It was a modern-looking kappa, with a tie round his neck, fishing alone. There was a distinct mark on his belly.

Kyoto, 1940.

**KAPPA**



## KAPPAS IN CONVERSE

*By R. Akutagawa*

# PREFACE

This is a story Patient No. 23 of a lunatic asylum tells anybody he comes across. I think he is over thirty now, but he looks very young for his age. The joys and sorrows he had experienced before he went off his head—well, let them be buried in the past. He told his lengthy story to me and Dr. S—, head physician of the asylum, his hands clasped all the time round his knees, and his eyes looking now and then out of the iron bars of the window—outside of which was seen an oak tree, quite bare, without even a single dead leaf, spreading its branches against the sky darkened by snow-clouds. He made very few gestures, but when for instance he said he had been surprised, he suddenly threw his head back....

I flatter myself that I have copied his narrative with tolerable accuracy. But if you are not satisfied with my notes, go and see him for yourselves at the S— Lunatic Asylum in the village of. \_ just outside the city of Tokyo. Patient No. 23 will greet you with a deep bow, and motion you to a hard-seated chair. Then, with a gloomy smile, he will quietly repeat his story. And when he comes to the end of the story—I still remember the sudden change of expression on his face—he will spring to his feet and, brandishing his clenched fists, will roar at you:

"Get out, you scoundrel! You too are a stupid, jealous, obscene, brazen-faced, self-conceited, cruel, and cheeky beast, aren't you? Get out, you sneaking little scoundrel!"

# I

One summer morning three years ago, I left an inn at Kamikōchi hot spring to climb Mt. Hodaka, with a rucksack on my back. As you know, the ascent of Mt. Hodaka can only be made by following up the narrow valley of the Azusagawa. I had climbed that mountain before, and even Mt. Yarigadake. So I went up the valley without a guide, although it was very foggy that morning.

For about an hour, which seemed to me a very long time, I walked in the fog, but there was no sign of its lifting. On the contrary it grew thicker. It grew so thick that I almost made up my mind to go back to the inn at Kamikōchi. But it was of course impossible to go back unless the fog lifted, and the beastly blur kept growing thicker and thicker. "Damn it! Better go up," I said to myself and struggled on through the tall growth of bamboo-grass, taking great care not to go astray from the watercourse.

I could see nothing but a wall of dense fog, though the monotony was broken at intervals by fresh green leaves on low-hanging branches of a beech or of a fir tree. Grazing horses and cows also loomed unexpectedly before me, but they were blotted out in an instant. In the meantime hunger and weariness got the better of me, and my wet clothes and blankets were heavier than I could easily bear. I gave in at last, and, guided by the sound of the water running against the rocks, groped my way down to the bottom of the valley.

I sat down on a rock by the stream to take a meal. I think I had spent about ten minutes cutting open a tin of corned beef; gathering

dead twigs and making a fire. Meanwhile the fog was lifting fast, as if it had brought me all the way down for the sole purpose of making a fool of me. Biting at a piece of bread, I looked at my wrist-watch. It was already twenty minutes past one. But what surprised me more was a strange, weird-looking face reflected for an instant upon the round glass of the watch. I looked back, and for the first time in my life I saw a—kappa! It was standing on a rock behind me, with one arm round the trunk of a white birch and one hand shading its eyes, watching me with intense curiosity.

I was taken aback, and for a while sat motionless. The kappa seemed frightened too. The hand over its eyebrows did not make the slightest movement. Then suddenly I jumped to my feet and sprang upon it. The kappa took to its heels. I thought it did. As it was, it made a dodge and was gone. I looked round in amazement through the tall bamboo-grass, and found it a few yards away looking back at me, ready at any moment to fly. But there was nothing strange in that. The odd thing about the devil was the color of its skin. When it was on the rock watching me it was grey all over. Now it was green from top to toe! “Confound you!” I cried out, and again sprang upon it. Of course it ran away. And for more than half an hour I gave it a furious chase through the bamboo-grass and over the rocks.

The kappa was a very good runner, by no means slower than a monkey. Many a time, while running after it like one in a delirium, I was on the point of losing sight of it. Many a time I slipped and fell. But when the kappa came to a place where a huge horse-chestnut tree spread its boughs, a fierce-looking ox with powerful horns and blood-shot eyes blocked its way. The kappa gave a strange scream, and jumped head over heels into an unusually tall growth of



bamboo-grass. “Now I've got it,” I said to myself, and—and in no time jumped in after it. But there was a pit or something, I suppose, which I did not see. For hardly had I touched the smooth back of the kappa when I fell head forward into deep darkness. Now even at such a moment of crisis the human mind indulges in the most unimportant thoughts. The moment I was off my feet I thought of the Kappa-bashi, a bridge near the inn at Kamikōchi hot spring. And then—well, I do not remember what happened after that. I only saw something like a flash of lightning before my eyes, and lost all consciousness.

## II

When at last I came round, I found myself lying on my back surrounded by a large number of kappas. One of them, who wore pince-nez over his thick beak, was kneeling beside me, listening to my chest with a stethoscope. When I opened my eyes, he motioned me to keep quiet, and called to some one at his back:

*“Quax, quax!”*

Presently two kappas came up with a stretcher. I was laid upon it, and was carried gently for several hundred yards through crowds and crowds of kappas. The street looked very much like the Ginza (main street in Tokyo). Behind the beech-trees that lined it on both sides could be seen all kinds of shops with sunshades, and between those rows of trees numberless motor-cars were running to and fro.

Soon my stretcher turned into a narrow by-street, and was carried into a house. It was the dwelling place, as I learned later, of that kappa who was wearing pince-nez—a doctor called Chack. Chack laid me down on a neat bed, and gave me a glass of some transparent liquid medicine. I lay quietly on the bed, and let him do what he pleased with me, for I was aching so badly in every joint that I could scarcely move.

Chack came to see me two or three times every day. And Bag the fisher-kappa—I mean that kappa I had met in that foggy valley—he also called on me at least once in three days. Kappas know much more about human beings than we know about them. Perhaps it is

because they capture us more often than we capture them, though, strictly speaking, I am not sure that they exactly *capture* us. Anyway, quite a number of people had visited the land of kappas before me, and many of them had stayed there till the end of their lives. For in that country we enjoy the privilege of living without working, simply because we are not kappas but human beings. Bag once told me of a young navvy who had come by chance upon the land and married a she-kappa and lived with her until he breathed his last. The she-kappa, Bag said, was not only the prettiest in that country, but was remarkably clever at deceiving her husband.

After a week or so, it was decided, according to the law of that country, that I should live next door to Chuck as a "specially protected inhabitant." My house was neat and cozy, though it was rather small. Of course the civilization of kappas does not much differ from that of mankind—at least from that of the Japanese. For instance, there was a small piano in a corner of the drawing-room which faced the street, and a framed etching on the wall. The only complaint I had was that not only the house itself; but the tables and chairs were all made for kappas, and therefore, like children's furniture, were a little too small for me.

Every evening I saw Chuck and Bag in this room, that is, in the drawing-room, and learned the kappa language from them. Of course I had many other visitors. I was a "specially protected inhabitant" as I said before, and naturally every kappa desired to have a look at me. Gael, for example, often came to see me. He was the president of a glass manufacturing company, and used to send for Chuck every day to have his blood pressure examined. But my best friend during the first two weeks or so was Bag the fisher-kappa.

One late afternoon—I remember the air was moist and warmish—we were talking in my drawing-room with a table between us, when suddenly he fell into silence, and, with his large eyes wide open, began staring at me. I did not see what he meant, so I asked in the kappa language: "*Quax, Bag, quo quel quan?*" (I say, Bag, what's the matter?)

Bag said nothing, but kept staring at me. Then he jumped to his feet, stuck out his tongue, and showed signs of springing upon me like a frog. I was frightened and rose stealthily from my seat and was just about to dash out of the room when, to my great joy, Doctor Chack came in.

"Hey, Bag, what are you doing?"

Chack glared at Bag through his pince-nez.

Bag looked crestfallen, and, raising his hand over and over again to his head apologetically, said:

"I'm sorry, sir. Awfully sorry. But it was really so amusing to see this gentleman scared that I couldn't help playing a little joke on him."

Then he turned to me and added, "I beg your pardon, sir."

### III

Before proceeding further, I think I must give you some idea of the animals called kappas. People still doubt whether they exist at all. But they do. There can be no doubt about it since I myself actually lived among them. They have a short-haired head and webbed hands and feet, like those pictures in the *Suiko Kōryaku* (A Study of the Water-tiger) and other books. Their average height is about three feet four inches. Their weight ranges from twenty to thirty pounds, according to Doctor Chack, though he says that there are some extraordinarily big ones who weigh more than fifty. The top of their heads is concave, forming an oval, dish-like hollow, and this *dish seems* to grow harder with years. For instance, old Bag's *dish* was quite different to the touch from young Chack's. But what is most remarkable about kappas is that unlike human beings they change color according to their surroundings. For instance, when they are in the grass they are just as green as the grass, and when they are on a rock they are just as grey as the rock. I think they have something in their skin tissue that chameleons have in theirs, for chameleons, you know, have the power of changing color. The discovery of this strange fact reminded me of a book of folklore which says that the kappas of western Japan are green and those of north-eastern districts red. It also brought back to my mind how Bag had disappeared in that foggy valley when I had tried to catch him.

It seems that kappas have a very rich deposit of fat beneath their skin. They never clothe themselves in spite of the comparatively low temperature—about fifty degrees F. — of their underground country.

Of course they wear spectacles, and carry cigarette cases and pocket-books and other things with them. But they get along very well without clothes or pockets, because, like kangaroos, they have a nice pouch on their bellies. One thing that struck me as being very funny was that they did not even wear a loin-cloth. I once asked Bag why they didn't. He went off into a fit of laughter, and, with his body bent back, cackled and cackled away until he said:

"I should like to know what makes you cover yourself."

## IV

Little by little I learned the everyday language of kappas, as well as their manners and customs. What puzzled me most was their topsy-turvy way of making fun of what we take seriously, and vice versa. Take for example " justice " and " humanity." They are very serious matters to us. But if you mention these things before kappas, they are sure to shake their sides with laughter. Perhaps it is because their idea of what is funny is entirely different from ours. I was once talking with Doctor Chuck about birth control, when suddenly he burst out laughing, his mouth wide open, shaking himself so violently that he nearly dropped his pince-nez. I was naturally offended, and questioned harshly what made him laugh. Chuck's answer was something like this—I am not quite sure about the details, because at that time I was not very familiar with the kappa language—but the gist of what he said was something like this:

"But it isn't fair for the parents to care only about their own convenience. It's too selfish, isn't it?"

From our human point of view, there is really nothing more funny than the way in which a kappa gives birth to a child. Shortly after that conversation about birth control, I went to Bag's house to see his wife in childbed. Kappas do the same thing as we do when they lie in. They get a doctor or a midwife to help them. But when at last the child is about to come out, the father puts his mouth at the ....of the mother as if he were on the telephone, and asks in a loud voice:

"Do you wish to be born into this world? Think it over and give

your answer."

Crouching on his knees, Bag repeated this question several times. Then he took a bottle of disinfectant from the table and rinsed out his mouth. The child in his wife's womb seemed to be somewhat constrained, for it replied in a very low voice:

"I don't wish to be born. In the first place, I don't like to inherit your blood. The insanity alone is horrible enough to think of. In the second place, I believe in the wickedness of living a kappa's life."

Bag looked embarrassed and scratched his head, while the midwife in attendance quickly inserted a big glass tube in the...of Bag's wife and injected some liquid. She heaved a deep sigh of relief, and at the same time her belly, which had been so big, shrivelled up like a balloon emptied of its hydrogen gas.

As might be expected from the answer of that foetus, kappas can walk and talk as soon as they are born. Chack once told me that he knew a child-kappa who, on the twenty-sixth day after birth, gave a lecture on the existence of God, though he died in his second month.

By the way, when I had stayed in that country for a month or two, I saw a big poster at a street corner. On the lower part of it were painted about a dozen kappas, some blowing trumpets, some armed with swords. The upper part was covered with spiral kappa characters that looked like watch-springs. A student kappa called Lap, who was walking with me then, read them to me in a loud voice, and I noted down every word very carefully. I am afraid that here again I may have made some minor mistakes in my translation, but this is about what those spirals said:



JOIN HEREDITY VOLUNTEER CORPS !  
IF YOU ARE HEALTHY KAPPAS,  
MARRY UNHEALTHY KAPPAS  
TO ELIMINATE HEREDITARY EVILS !

Of course I told Lap on the spot that it was altogether impracticable. But my remark made all the kappas around the poster, as well as Lap, burst into guffaw.

"Impracticable? But judging from what you told me, it is actually done in your country, isn't it, just as it is always done here? Some of your sons of good families fall in love with their maid-servants, some daughters with their chauffeurs. What does that mean? The fact is, they are eliminating hereditary evils. Only they don't know what they are doing. Moreover, I should think that our volunteers are much nobler than those human volunteers you spoke of the other day who kill each other for a mere railway line or two."

Lap's big belly was rippling with suppressed laughter, though he talked with a serious look on his face. But I could not afford to join in the mirth, for while I was off my guard one of the kappas robbed me of my fountain-pen. I hurriedly tried to seize him.

However, the slimy skin of kappas makes it by no means easy to catch them. The devil slipped like an eel out of my hold and ran away as fast as he could, his body, which was as thin as a mosquito, bent forward almost to the ground.

## V

I am as much indebted to Lap as to Bag the fisher-kappa. They both helped me in many ways. But it was Lap who introduced me to another kappa named Tock. Tock was a kappa poet. Of course he had long hair, for kappa poets wear their hair long just as our poets do. I often went to see him by way of killing the time. He looked as free of care as could be, smoking and writing poems in his little room decorated with alpine plants in pots. He was a free lover and had no wife, but I used to find a she-kappa in a corner of the room, knitting or something. He always welcomed me with a smile, though it was not very pleasant to see a smiling kappa—at first it made me feel rather uneasy—but he would greet me with a smile and say: "Hello! Glad to see you, old chap. Won't you sit down?"

He often talked about the life and art of kappas. He believed that there was nothing so foolish as the life of ordinary kappas. Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, all derived their sole pleasure from tormenting each other. Especially, he said, the family system was absurd beyond all absurdities. One day he pointed out of the window and said disgustedly:

"Look at those fools !"

On the street outside a young kappa was trudging along almost out of breath, carrying seven or eight kappas around his neck, including two old ones that seemed to be his parents. I was much moved by the sight, and praised the young kappa for his spirit of self-sacrifice.

"H'm ! " said the poet. "You will make a good citizen in this country too. By the way, are you a socialist?"

Of course I said " *Qua!* " which is the kappa word for "Yes."

"Then I suppose you are ready to sacrifice a genius for the sake of a hundred common beggars."

"What are you, then?" I asked. "Someone told me that you are an anarchist—"

"No, I'm a superman," declared Tock defiantly, though, literally, he said he was a *super-kappa*.

He had his own view of art. He maintained that art should be unfettered by any rules of life, that it should be art for art's sake, and that therefore an artist should first of all be a super-kappa and be above good and evil. But Tock was not the only kappa that held this view. All his poet friends seemed to be more or less of the same opinion. Tack often took me to the Super-kappas' Club, where I found all sorts of super-kappas—poets, novelists, dramatists, critics, painters, musicians, sculptors, and amateur lovers of art. They were always talking merrily in the salon under bright electric lamps. Or sometimes they were proudly showing one another how superkappas should act. For instance, I once saw a sculptor among the tall ferns planted in pots, holding a young kappa in his arms and playing eagerly with his. ...At another time a she-kappa, who was a novelist, stood on the table before us and drank sixty bottles of absinthe at a stretch, though, unfortunately, when she had done with the sixtieth bottle she fell down to the floor and expired on the spot.

One bright moonlight night, Tock and I were walking arm in arm on our way home from the Super-kappas' Club. Tock was unusually

low-spirited and did not say anything at all. After a while we came to a small lighted window, through which we saw two kappas, evidently husband and wife, sitting at dinner table with three child kappas. Tock heaved a deep sigh and said:

"I think I am a super-kappa in my relations with she-kappas, you know, but I can't see such a scene of family life as that without a touch of envy."

"But don't you think you are contradicting yourself?"

For some minutes the poet kept standing still in the moonlight, with his arms folded, watching in silence the five peaceful kappas and their dinner table. Then he replied: " Anyhow, those scrambled eggs there are more wholesome than any love affairs."

## VI

In fact, love-making among kappas is quite different from ours. The moment a she-kappa comes upon a likable he-kappa, she takes any means whatever, fair or foul, to catch him. An artless girl-kappa simply runs and runs after the he-kappa. I myself once saw with my own eyes a she-kappa rushing like mad after a he-kappa. But it is not only the girl-kappa that gives the chase. She is often reinforced by her parents and brothers and sisters. Oh, how miserable the he-kappa is ! For even if by good fortune he could escape from the she-kappa after running about a great deal, he would certainly be confined to bed for a few months at least. One day, when I was reading Tock's poems at home, I was surprised by Lap the student, who tumbled in and fell flat on the floor and gasped out: "Heavens ! I was caught at last !"

I threw down the book of poems, and locked the front door at once. But through the keyhole I could see a girl-kappa, who was very little and had her face powdered with sulphur, still hanging around. Lap was laid up in my bed for some weeks, and what was worse, his beak gradually became rotten and at last fell off.

Occasionally, I admit, a he-kappa also chases a she-kappa. But that is because the she-kappa entices him to do so. I once saw a he-kappa running wildly after a she-kappa. The she-kappa, while running away from him, came to a stop on purpose from time to time, or walked on all fours. Then she allowed herself at the right moment to be caught quite easily as if she had been exhausted. The

he-kappa lay there on the ground for a while, with the she-kappa in his arms. And when at last he got up, oh, how disappointed, how regretful, how miserable he looked ! But he was not the worst case. I saw another he-kappa, a little fellow, running after another she-kappa. The she-kappa, as is usual with she-kappas, was making her seductive escape, when there came from the opposite direction a tall and stout he-kappa, snorting furiously. She saw him, and ran straight up to him, screaming:

"Help ! Help ! He'll murder me!"

In an instant the big kappa seized the culprit and held him down in the middle of the street. Poor fellow ! The little kappa grasped at the air two or three times with his webbed hands, and passed away under the very beak of the she-kappa, who was now clinging fast with a broad grin to the neck of the big kappa.

All the he-kappas I knew were chased by she-kappas. Even Bag, who had wife and children, was not only run after but was actually caught on two or three occasions. The only exception was Mag, a philosopher who lived next door to Tock the poet. He never had the misfortune. Probably it was because he was too bad-looking, or because he kept indoors most of the time, or both. I called on him now and then to have a chat. He was always sitting at his high-legged desk in his dusky room, reading bulky books by the light of a seven-color glass lantern. One day we discussed kappas' love-making.

"Why doesn't the Government adopt stricter measures to prevent female kappas from running after males? " I asked.

"It is partly because there are very few female kappas among the

government officials," replied the philosopher. " Female kappas are more jealous than male kappas, you know, and if only we had more female officials, I am sure male kappas would be chased less often and enjoy a more peaceful life. But very little could be expected from that after all, for even among their official circles female kappas would run after male kappas."

"Then I suppose that you are happier than any other kappa?"

Mag rose from his chair, took my hands in his, and said with a sigh: " It's quite natural that you don't see how we feel, because you are not a kappa. But occasionally I myself desire those dreadful she-kappas to run after me."

## VII

I often went to concerts with Tock the poet, and I remember one of them in particular. It was the third concert I attended in that country. The hall looked much the same as a similar place in Japan. On the seats raised above one another some three or four hundred kappas were listening enraptured, each with a programme in his or her hand. I was sitting on a front seat, in company with Tock and his she-kappa and Mag the philosopher. By and by, after a cello solo, there appeared on the platform a strangely small-eyed kappa, carelessly carrying his music books under his arm. According to the printed programme this was Craback, *a* celebrated composer. But it was not necessary to look at the programme. I knew him by sight. He was a member of the Super-kappas' Club to which Tock belonged.

"*Lied*—Craback." (Their programmes, like ours, were mostly written in German.)

Amidst a thunderous clapping of hands, Craback just bowed to us and stepped quietly to the piano. Then he began as carelessly to play a *lied* of his own composition. Tack used to say that he was by far the greatest musician that had ever lived in that country. I was interested not only in his music but also in his hobby lyrics, so I listened intently to the melody that came from the big bow-shaped piano. Tock and Mag seemed to be spellbound. But the she-kappa, who was very pretty at least in the eyes of kappas, was sticking out her long tongue impatiently from time to time, grasping the programme viciously. She cherished bitter hatred towards Craback,



Mag said, because she had failed to capture him about ten years before.

Full of passion, Craback continued his performance on the piano as if he were fighting, when all of a sudden the hall rang with a thunderous voice:

"Stop!"

I was surprised, and looked back, and saw an extraordinarily big police-kappa sitting entirely at ease on a back seat. No doubt the order had come from him.

"Stop playing!" he shouted again louder than before.

Then—then all was wild confusion.

"Tyranny!"

"Down with police tyranny!"

"Play, Craback, play on!"

"Idiot!"

"Beast!"

"Get out!"

"Don't give in!"

And amid these tumultuous cries, chairs were overturned, programmes flew, stones and empty bottles of cider and half-bitten cucumbers came down like rain. I was amazed, and asked Tock what on earth all that was. But he was too excited to pay attention to me. Standing upon his seat, he was shouting at the top of his voice: "Play, Craback, play on" Even his she-kappa, who seemed to have

lost her animosity towards the musician, was screaming out, “Police! Tyranny! “So I turned to Mag and asked,” What's all this?”

"Oh, these things happen very often in this country. Paintings and literary works, you know,—"

Ducking his head whenever anything came flying over his head, Mag went on placidly: “As a general rule, anyone can see more or less clearly what is expressed in a painting or a literary work. So their sale or exhibition is never prohibited in this country. But musical performances are often banned. For however injurious they may be to public morals, they are not appreciated by those kappas who haven't got an ear."

"But has that officer got an ear for music?" “Well, it's doubtful. Maybe that melody reminded him of the beating of the heart he feels when in bed with his wife,"

The confusion grew, and almost complete anarchy reigned in the hall. Craback remained at his piano looking back upon us with a lordly air. But With all his lordly air he was obliged to dodge the bottles and cucumbers and other missiles that came flying at him. So there was a hasty change in his admirable posture every two or three seconds. But, generally speaking, he managed to keep the dignity of a great musician and stuck to his place, his small eyes shining fiercely. As for me—well, I was hiding myself behind Tock to avoid the missiles, but I was curious and talked on with Mag.

"Unreasonable censorship, don't you think?"

"Well, no," replied the philosopher. “It’s more advanced than the censorship of any other country. Take Japan for example. Only about a month ago, they actually—"

At that moment, Mag was hit right on the top of his head by an empty bottle, and with a "*Quack*" (a kappa interjection) fell down unconscious.

## VIII

Somehow I liked Gael, president of the glass manufacturing company. Gael was one of the biggest capitalists. Probably no other kappa in the whole country had a bigger belly than his. How happy he looked in his easy chair with his litchi-like wife and cucumber-like children beside him! I often went with Judge Pep and Doctor Chack to dine with him, and used his letters of introduction to see various factories with which he or his friends were connected in some way or other. One of the most interesting was a book factory. A young kappa engineer conducted me over it, and showed me giant machines run by hydro-electric power. I was deeply impressed with the enormous progress the kappas had made in their mechanical industry. The engineer told me that the annual production of the factory amounted to seven million volumes. But what struck me with wonder was not the quantity of the output, but the remarkably simple process by which so many millions of books were produced. For in that country books are manufactured merely by throwing paper, ink and grey-colored powder into the funnel-shaped mouths of the machines. In less than five minutes these materials are poured out in torrents of books printed in quartos, octavos, etc. I asked what that grey-colored powder was. The kappa engineer, who was standing before the shiny black machines with an air of importance, replied indifferently:

"Oh, just rubbish—brains of asses dried and ground to powder. Current price is two or three *sen* per ton?"

Of course book-making is not the only branch of industry where such miracles are accomplished. Picture manufacturing and music manufacturing are done by no less wonderful processes. In fact, according to Gael an average of seven or eight hundred new machines are invented every month, and things are produced on a larger and larger scale with less and less labor. The result is forty or fifty thousand more kappas thrown out of work every month. But while in that country I did not even once come across the word "strike" in the newspapers which I used to read every morning. It struck me as being very strange so that at one of the dinners at Gael's, to which I was invited together with Pep and Chuck, I asked what the reason was.

"They are all eaten up," said Gael nonchalantly, a cigar between his lips.

I did not see what he meant by "eaten up." Chuck, who was wearing pince-nez as usual, seemed to have perceived my bewilderment and explained:

"We kill all those workers and eat their flesh. Just look at this newspaper here. This month 64,769 workers have been dismissed, and the price of meat has dropped accordingly."

"Do they meekly consent to be killed?" I asked.

"It's no use making a fuss," said Pep, who sat frowning by a wild peach in a pot. "We've got the 'Workers Butchery Law.'"

I was disgusted, of course. But not only Gael the host but also Pep and Chuck seemed to take it all for granted. Indeed, Chuck even laughed and said in a mocking way:

"After all, the state is so good as to save them the trouble of starving to death or of committing suicide. Just a little poisonous gas, you see, and they are done for. So they don't suffer much pain."

"But how can you eat—"

"Oh, don't be silly. If Mag heard you, he would surely break out into roars of laughter. In your country some of the low-class girls become prostitutes, don't they? It is sentimentalism to be indignant over the custom of eating workers' flesh."

Gael, who had been listening to all this, took a plate of sandwiches from a table near at hand and offered it to me.

"Won't you have some?" he said coolly. "This is the flesh of one of those workers."

I was so shocked and nauseated that I ran out of the drawing-room into the darkness of the night, with the laughter of Pep and Chuck behind me. The sky was threatening. Not a single star was shining above the houses. And all the way home I kept on throwing up pale, whitish liquid, leaving it here and there on the dark road.

## IX

But Gael, president of the glass manufacturing company, was certainly an amiable kappa. I often went with him to the club of which he was a member and spent a pleasant evening. I felt much more at home there than at the Super-kappas' Club to which Tock belonged. Gael was not much of a thinker as Mag the philosopher was, but he opened my eyes to a world entirely unknown to me—a world wide and strange. He always chatted in good spirits, stirring his coffee with a gold spoon.

One very foggy evening, I was listening to Gael with a vase of winter roses between us. The room was of Secessionist style, if I remember aright, and was furnished with white tables and chairs with thin gold borders. Gael looked more self-complacent than usual, and with a bright smile all over his face talked about the Quorax Cabinet then in power.

Quorax 'is only a meaningless interjection like Oh.' But it was the name of a political party whose primary concern was supposed to be the promotion of the welfare of the kappa race.

"The Quorax Party is under the control of Loppé," said Gael. "As you know, he is a famous kappa statesman. Bismarck said that honesty is the best diplomacy, but Loppé is honest not only in his diplomacy but also in his management of home affairs ....."

"But that speech of Loppe's—"

"Come now, just listen. That speech of his is of course a lie, every

bit of it. 'But as everybody knows that it is a lie, it is an honest speech after all, isn't it? No one but you and your countrymen will call it a lie simply because it is a lie. We kappas do not—well, it doesn't matter. What I am going to tell you is about Loppe. He leads the Quorax Party as I said just now, but behind him is another kappa who is pulling the wires. It is Quiqui, President of the Pou-Fou."

'Pou-Fou,' which is the name of a newspaper, also is a meaningless interjection, and the only Japanese equivalent I can think of is 'Ah.'

"But," Gael went on, "even Quiqui hasn't the right to call himself his own master, because he is under my control."

"Under your control? But I understand that the Pou-Fou is a friend of the labor classes, isn't it? How is it that Quiqui, its president, should be under your control?"

"The kappas on the Pou-Fou are of course friends of laborers," replied the capitalist. "But they've got to obey Quiqui who is their master. And Quiqui can't get along without my support."

Gael was playing with his solid gold spoon, smiling good-naturedly. I said nothing. He made me feel sorry for the poor Pou-Fou kappas rather than hate him. But my silence seemed to have betrayed my feeling, for, swelling his big belly, he said:

"But all the Pou-Fou kappas are not the friends of laborers. After all, we kappas love ourselves more than we love anybody else.—Well, Quiqui is under my control, you see, but to make matters more complicated, there's another kappa pulling strings behind me. Who do you think it is? It's my wife, that lovely Mrs. Gael!"



And Gael gave a loud laugh.

"Which makes you happy, I suppose?"

"Well, I'm contented, anyhow, though I'd never say so among my fellow-kappas. I'm talking frankly now because you are not one of us."

"Then the Quorax Cabinet is after all controlled by Mrs. Gael?"

"Does it come to that?—Anyhow, a she-kappa was no doubt the cause of that war we had seven years ago."

"War? Did you ever wage war?"

"Why, yes. It may at any time break out again. As long as we have a neighboring country"

To tell the truth, it had never occurred to me that the kappas had a neighbor nation. Gael told me that the kappas always regarded the kawaosos (otters) as their potential enemy, and that the kawaosos maintained armaments no less powerful than those of the kappas. I had never heard of the kawaosos being a formidable enemy of the kappas. Nothing had ever been said about it even by the author of *Suiko Kōryaku* (A Study of the Water-tiger) or by Mr. Kunio Yanagida, author of that admirable book of folklore entitled *Santō Mindanshi*. It was an entirely new discovery. So I took great interest in the story of the war between the two races.

"Before the war," Gael continued, "both countries were busy making military preparations and were jealously watching each other. The kawaosos were afraid of us, and we were no less afraid of them. And in that tense atmosphere, it happened one day that a kawaoso, who was staying in this country, paid a visit to a kappa and

his wife. Now this she-kappa had secret designs to dispose of her husband. He was a regular rake. Besides, the insurance money on his life may have tempted her in some measure to commit the crime."

"Do you know them?" I asked.

"Not both. I only know the husband. My wife speaks of him as if he were a damned rascal. But I think that he is not so much a rascal as a maniac obsessed by the fear of being caught by she-kappas.—Well, the she-kappa put a dose of prussic potassium into her husband's cocoa cup, and gave it in mistake to the guest kawaoso, who of course died. And then—"

"And then the war?"

"Yes. For unluckily the kawaoso was a holder of an order."

"Who won the war?"

"The kappas, of course. As many as 369,500 brave kappas were killed in battle. But the losses were negligible compared with those of the enemy. Almost all the furs we have are kawaoso furs. I sent coal-cinders to the front during the war, besides manufacturing glass."

"Coal-cinders? What for?"

"Food, of course. Kappas eat anything when they are hungry."

"But—don't take it ill—but the poor kappas at the front—Well, it would cause scandal in my country."

"It does in this country too. But as I go about telling people about it, no one is scandalized. Mag the philosopher, you know, says, 'Confess thy misconducts of thine own accord, and they will all

vanish.'—Moreover, my heart was burning with patriotism, as well as with the desire of making money."

Just then a boy servant of the club came in.

He bowed to Gael and said as if reciting:

"A fire broke out next door to you, sir." "F-f—fire?"

Gael jumped up from his seat, and so did I, when the boy added calmly:

"But they have put it down, sir."

He made another bow and went out. Gael looked after him with a mixed expression on his face as if he were on the point of laughing and crying at the same time. And suddenly I became aware of the feeling of hate that had been brewing in me for this president of the glass manufacturing company. But now he was standing there before me, not a great capitalist, but just a common kappa. I picked a winter rose from the vase and put it in his hand, saying:

"I'm glad the fire has been put out, but Mrs. Gael must be so frightened. Come now, go straight home with this rose."

"Thanks."

Gael shook me by the hand. Then, with a sudden grin, he added in a low voice: "That house is my property. I shall get the fire insurance money, anyhow."

I can still recall that smile of Gael's very dearly—a smile which I could neither despise nor hate.

# X

On the day after the fire, Lap the student kappa came to my drawing-room and without a word sank into a chair.

"What's the matter, Lap," I asked, a cigarette between my lips. "You look very much in the blues."

Lap said nothing. He sat looking absently on the floor, with his left foot on his right and his head hung so low that I could not see even his rotten beak.

"I say, Lap, what's up?"

He raised his face at last.

"Just a silly little incident," he said in a sorrowful nasal tone. "I was looking out of my window, when I noticed a little flower. 'Why, the insect-catching violet is out,' I muttered. My sister heard it, and suddenly changing color, flared up, 'The insect-catching violet ! How can you—well, of course I am an insect-catching violet, if you like.' And Mother, who dotes on my sister, joined her in pouring bitter words upon me."

"How can it hurt your sister that an insect-catching violet has come out?"

"Probably she took it for catching a he-kappa. Then my aunt, who is on bad terms with Mother, also took part in the quarrel, and that made matters worse than ever. Moreover, Father, who is drunk all the year round, lost his temper at the hullabaloo and began to beat us

indiscriminately. And on top of that my brother stole Mother's purse and ran away in a trice, probably to a cinema or something like that. I'm—I'm really...."

Lap buried his face in his hands, and began to sob. Of course I sympathized with him, and recalled Tock's contemptuous remark on the family system. I did my best to console Lap, tapping him on the shoulder.

"Cheer up, old man. These things happen in any family."

"But—if only my beak wasn't rotten...."

"Oh, you've got to put up with it. There's no help for it. Come now, let's go and have a chat, say, with Tock."

"Mr. Tock despises me, because I can't give up my family so fearlessly as he does."

"All right. Then we'll go to Craback's."

As I had been on friendly terms with Craback since that concert, I decided to take Lap to that great musician. Craback was living in greater luxury than Tock, though not at all like Gael the capitalist. His room was full of Tanagra figurines, Persian crockeries and other curios, and on a divan under his portrait he was often seen playing with his children. That day, however, we found him sitting there sullenly by himself with folded arms, lots of torn pieces of paper scattered at his feet. Lap was evidently intimidated by the sight, although he had doubtless seen the kappa on many occasions before in company with Tock the poet. He made a courteous bow and sat down in a corner.

"What's the matter, Craback?" I asked.

"What's the matter? Pshaw! They say that my lyrics are not nearly so good as Tock's, those fools of critics"

"But you are a musician—"

"Well, I could stand that. But they have the impudence to say that compared with Lock I'm not worth the name of a musician."

Lock was a musician who was often compared with Craback. But as he was not a member of the Super-kappas' Club, I never had the pleasure of talking to him, though his photographed face—that peculiar face with a bent-up beak—was quite familiar to me.

"Lock is a genius," I said, "but he hasn't got that modern passion which is so predominant in your music."

"Do you really think so?"

"Of course I do"

Craback suddenly stood up, arid as quick as thought grasped a Tanagra figurine and dashed it to the floor. Lap was so frightened that he gave a cry and was about to run away, when Craback made a sign to him and me not to be scared.

"You're no better than those vulgar kappas who haven't got an ear for music," he said coolly. "I'm afraid of Lock."

"Are you? Don't put on the modest kappa."

"Why should I put on the modest kappa? Surely I'd rather do so before those critics than before you. I'm—I am a genius. I'm not afraid of Lock in that point."

"Then what are you afraid of?"

"Something that can't be named—the star, as it were, under which Lock was born."

"I don't quite understand what you mean."

"Well, maybe you would if I put it in this way: Lock is not influenced by me, while I always find myself influenced by him."

"That is because your susceptibility—"

"No, it is not a matter of susceptibility. Lock has faith in himself and his work and is quietly doing what he alone can do, while I am always restless. The difference may seem to Lock to be of little account, but I feel it as badly as if he were ten miles ahead of me."

"But that heroic sonata of yours, sir,— " ventured Lap.

Craback narrowed his small eyes contemptuously and fixed the student kappa with them.

"Shut up," he rapped out. "You know nothing about these things. I know Lock. I know him better than all those poor dogs who prostrate themselves before him do."

"Come, old chap, be calm."

"How could I?—I always think that some Being that we don't know has placed Lock before me in order to make a laughing-stock of me—of Craback. Mag the philosopher knows all these things, though he is always shut up in his room poring over dusty old books under that colored-glass lantern."

"Mag? What makes you think so?"

"Just have a look at this new book of his—*A Fool's Words*. Here

you are!"

Craback handed—or rather threw me the book. Then, folding his arms again, he said bluntly: "Well, so long."

I went out into the street again with Lap who was completely dejected. Behind the beech-trees on both sides of the crowded street stood the shops as indifferently as ever. We walked along in silence, with no definite object in mind. Soon there came from the opposite direction the long-haired poet Tock. He saw us, and taking a handkerchief out of his-bellypouch, wiped his forehead several times.

"Hullo!" he said. "You are quite a stranger. I'm going to see Craback. I haven't seen him for an age."

I did not like to let the two artists meet and quarrel, so I told the poet in a roundabout way in what state Craback was that day.

"Very well," he replied. "Then I'll not see him today. Craback is a victim of nervous breakdown, you know.—I also have been suffering from sleeplessness for two or three weeks now."

"That's too bad," I said. "What do you say to taking a walk with us?"

"Thanks. Not today. Oh!"

Tock gave a frightened cry, and clutched at my arm. A cold sweat was oozing all over his naked body.

"What's the matter, Tock?"

"What's the matter, sir?"



"I saw—," gasped Tock, "I thought I saw a green monkey popping his head out of that motor-car."

I felt a little anxious about the poet and suggested that he should consult Chuck the doctor at once. But it was in vain trying to persuade him. He simply would not listen to me. Moreover, looking at us suspiciously from one to the other, he *said*:

"I'm not an anarchist, I assure you. Please remember that. Good-bye! I won't have anything to do with that doctor fellow."

We stood gazing vacantly after him—well, as a matter of fact, not both of us. For, looking round, I found Lap in the middle of the street, his body bent almost to the ground, watching between his legs the unbroken stream of motorcars and pedestrians. I thought that this kappa too might have gone crazy, and hurriedly pulled him up.

"Hey! What are you doing?"

But Lap seemed quite all right and replied calmly as he rubbed his eyes:

"I just tried a topsy-turvy look at the world, because the upright view is so very gloomy. But it looks the same either way."

# XI

These are some of the passages I found in Mag the philosopher's *A Fool's Words* :

"A fool believes that everybody is a fool except himself."

"We love nature partly because she does not show us any hate or jealousy."

"The wisest rule of life for a kappa is to despise, and yet not in the least violate, the manners and customs of his time."

"What we have the greatest desire to take pride in is what we do not possess."

"No one has any objection to the destruction of idols. Nor has anyone the slightest objection to his being idolized. But he who can sit at ease on the throne of idols is one most blessed by the gods—a fool, a rascal, or a hero."

Craback had marked this passage with his nail.

"All the ideas necessary for our life seem to have been already in our possession three thousand years ago. Perhaps we are only stirring up old embers into new flames."

"As a rule, all that is characteristic of us is above our consciousness."

"If happiness is accompanied by pain, and peace by ennui,...?"

"To defend oneself is more difficult than to defend others. Let him

who doubts it see how a lawyer gets off."

"Pride, love and doubt—these three have been the cause of all evil thoughts and doings, and perhaps of all virtues, for the past three thousand years."

"To reduce material desires does not always bring peace of mind. In order to live in peace, spiritual desires must also be reduced."

Here again Craback had left a nail mark.

"We are less happy than human beings. Human beings are not so highly developed as kappas."

At these words I burst out laughing.

"To do is to be able to do, and to be able to do is to do. After all, we cannot get out of this vicious circle.—In other words, our whole life is contrary to reason."

"Baudelaire, after he had become an imbecile, expressed his philosophy of life in a single word—*woman*. But that does not quite show what he was. What he really was is revealed more fully in the fact that he forgot the word *stomach* in his proud reliance on his genius—his poetical genius which was enough to support his material life."

Here too I found a mark of Craback's nail.

"If we were to act strictly in accordance with reason, we should have to deny our existence itself. The fact that Voltaire, who deified reason, enjoyed a long and happy life, shows that human beings are on a lower stage of evolution than kappas."

## XII

It was a rather cold afternoon. Having got tired of reading *A Fool's Words*, I left my little house to call on Mag the philosopher. When I came to a lonely street corner, I saw a thin mosquito-like kappa leaning absently against a wall. Who do you think it was? Well, it was that very kappa who had stolen my fountain-pen some time before. I was glad I had got him at last, and called to a stout police-kappa who was just passing by:

"Will you just examine that kappa, please? He stole my fountain-pen about a month ago."

"Hey, look here," said the officer to the kappa, raising the club in his right hand. Police-kappas carry a yew club with them, instead of a sabre. I was afraid that the thief might run away, but he stepped towards the officer calm and composed, and stood before him with his arms folded, looking defiantly at him and at me. The police-kappa non-chalantly took a note-book out of his belly-pouch and asked:

"Your name?"

"Grook."

"Occupation?"

"A post-kappa, until a few days ago."

"Very well. Now, Grook, this gentleman says that you stole his fountain-pen?"

"Yes,—about a month ago."

"What for?"

"I wanted to give it to my child as a plaything."

"And the child?"

Here the officer fixed a stern look on the kappa.

"He's been dead for a week now."

"Have you got the death certificate with you?"

Grook drew out a sheet of paper from his belly-pouch. The police-kappa just glanced over it, and with a grin tapped the kappa on the shoulder, saying:

"All right. Sorry to have troubled you."

I was dumbfounded and stared at the officer, while the thief walked off, grumbling. Then I collected myself and asked:

"Why don't you arrest that kappa?"

"He isn't guilty."

"But he actually stole my fountain-pen—"

"Yes, probably to give it to his child as a plaything. But the child is dead now. If you want to know more about it, please look into Article 1,285 of the Penal Code."

With these words the officer walked quickly away. I did not know what to do, so I hurried to Mag's house, repeating between my teeth 'Article 1,285 of the Penal Code.' Mag the philosopher likes to have company. That day I found in his dusky room Judge Pep and Doctor

Chuck and Gael the president of the glass manufacturing company, smoking freely under the seven-color glass lantern. I was glad to meet Judge Pep, for I thought that he could save me the trouble of looking into Article 1,285 of the Penal Code, and as soon as I sat down on a chair I asked:

"Don't you punish criminals in this country;Mr. Pep?"

Pep, who was puffing away at a gold-tipped cigarette, blew a long breath of smoke toward: the ceiling, and then replied wearily:

"Yes, we do. Sometimes we punish them with death."

"But about a month ago...."

I told him all about the fountain-pen affair and asked him what Article 1,285 of the Penal Code prescribed.

"Well, it runs: 'No criminal shall be punished after the circumstances that have compelled the same to commit the crime have ceased to exist.' By this provision, you see, that kappa who stole your fountain-pen for his child has been acquitted of the crime automatically, because he is no longer a father."

"It's ridiculous, I should think."

"Don't be silly. It is the identification of a kappa who *was* a father with a kappa who *is* a father that is ridiculous. By the way, the Japanese law regards the two as one and the same person, doesn't it? That is very funny in our eyes. Hu-hu-hu-hu!"

Throwing his cigarette end away with a bored look, Pep uttered a sardonic laugh under his breath, when Chuck, who had very little to do with laws, fixed his pince-nez and put in:

"Are there executions in Japan, too?"

"Rather," I said. "They are hanged."

And turning again to Pep, whose air of cold indifference had aroused a touch of antipathy in me, I made a cynical remark:

"You carry out your death penalty in a more civilized manner, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Pep, as calmly as ever. "We haven't got such a thing as hanging. Electric devices are sometimes used, but only in very rare cases. Usually we just tell the name of the crime that has been committed."

"Is that enough to kill a kappa?"

"Quite! We have more delicate nerves than you human beings."

"That is how murders also are sometimes committed," said Gael, smiling amiably, with the purple light of the colored-glass lantern reflected all over his face. "The other day a socialist charged me with robbery. It nearly paralyzed my heart."

"It seems to me," interposed Mag the philosopher, "that this type of murder is committed more often than is supposed to be. I know a lawyer who was killed in the same way."

I looked back. Mag was talking with a cynical smile on his face as usual, his eyes turned away from us.

"One day he was called a frog," he went on. "You know that in this country a frog means a cold-blooded wretch. Well, the lawyer was called a frog, and from that day he kept on asking himself whether he was a frog or whether he was not, until at last he passed

away."

"That's suicide, after all," I commented.

"The rascal who called him a frog intended to kill him. But from your point of view, it's just a case of suicide—"

All at once, Mag was interrupted by a sharp report of a revolver that shook the air on the other side of the wall. Evidently it came from Tock the poet's house.



## XIII

We rushed to Tock's house. Among the alpine plants in pots he was lying on his back with a revolver in his right hand, blood streaming from the top of his concave head. By his side a she-kappa was crying noisily with her face buried in his breast. I lifted her to her feet—though I did not much like to touch the slimy skin of a kappa—and asked her what or earth was the matter.

"I don't know," she said. "He was writing something, when suddenly he shot himself through the head. Oh, what shall I do *Qur-r-r-r-r, qur-r-r-r-r!*" (This is a kappa's cry of grief.)

"Mr. Tock was selfish," said Gael the president of the glass manufacturing company to Judge Pep, shaking his head mournfully, "He always insisted on having his own way; you know."

But Pep said nothing. He was engaged in lighting his gold-tipped cigarette. Then Chack, who had been on his knees examining the wound, turned to us five with an air worthy of medical profession and said:

"He's no more. He was suffering from chronic dyspepsia, and that was enough to make him melancholy."

"He was writing something?" said Mag the philosopher to himself by way of an excuse, and picked up a sheet of paper that lay on the desk. We all craned our necks, except myself, and looked at it over Mag's broad shoulders.

*"Now shall I rise and go  
To that glen beyond this vale of woe  
To that rocky glen,  
Where the water is cool and clear,  
And the air is sweet with flowering herbs."*

Mag looked back with an ironical smile and said, "This is a cribbed poem from Goethe's Mignon's song. It looks as if Tock's suicide was partly due to the exhaustion of his poetical genius."

Just then a motor-car drove up, and there appeared in the doorway Craback the musician. He saw what had happened, and stood there motionless for a minute. Then he stepped up to us, and shouted to Mag:

"Is that Tock's will?"

"No, it's his last poem."

"Poem?"

Mag calmly handed the manuscript to Craback whose hair was standing on end. Craback began to read it intently, with his eyes riveted on it, paying no attention to whatever Mag said.

"What do you think about Tock's death?" asked the philosopher.

*"Now shall I rise and go—my time too may come at any moment  
—To that glen beyond this vale of woe—"*

"But you've been one of his best friends, haven't you?"

"Best friends? Tock never had any friend —To that glen beyond this vale of woe—But Tock was so unfortunate—To that rocky glen where the water is cool and clear—"

"So unfortunate?" pursued Mag.

*"Where the water is cool and clear—You are all blessed —To that rocky glen. . . ."*

The sight of the she-kappa still crying bitterly touched my heart. I put my arm softly round her shoulders and took her to a sofa in a corner of the room, where a child-kappa, apparently about two years old, was smiling innocently. I acted the mother-kappa and fondled the child for some time, until I felt tears well up in my eyes. All through my sojourn in the land of kappas I never shed a tear except on that occasion.

"It is a misfortune," said Gael the capitalist, "to be a member of the family of such a selfish kappa, isn't it?"

"Quite so," replied Judge Pep, again lighting a cigarette. "He gave no thought whatever to his family."

At that moment we were surprised by a loud cry from Craback the musician. "Capital!" he exclaimed, with the manuscript still in his hand. "I've got a splendid funeral march!"

With his narrow eyes shining, Craback just shook Mag's hand and dashed to the door. By that time a crowd of neighboring kappas had gathered before the house, and were trying noisily to peep in. Craback forced his way through them, jumped into his motor-car and whirled away in an instant.

"Hey there, don't peep in!" shouted Judge Pep, and he pushed the curious kappas out like a police-man and shut the door upon them. The room suddenly became quiet. And in that quietness—amid the smell of Tock's blood mixed with the perfume of alpine flowers, we talked over what we could do for the deceased and his family. But Mag the philosopher was absorbed in his own thoughts, with his eyes fixed on Tock's body. I tapped him on the shoulder and asked what he was thinking about.

"About the life of kappas," he replied.

"Well, what about the life of kappas?"

"After all, if we kappas want to live a happy life, we must—"

Mag looked a little embarrassed and added in a low voice: "It seems to me that we must believe in something greater than kappas."

## XIV

It was these words of Mag's that made me think of religion. I have always been a materialist, and before that time I had never given any serious thought to religion. But as Mag's words came just when I was moved by Tock's untimely death, I began to wonder what the religion of kappas was. So I asked Lap the student about it when I saw him shortly afterwards.

"Well," said Lap, "there are Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Parseeism and other religions. But by far the most important is Modernism, or Life-worship."

'Life-worship' is only a rough translation from the original kappa word *Quemoocha*. *Cha* corresponds to the English suffix *ism*, and *quemoo* is derived from *quemal*, which means to live,' or more correctly, 'to eat and drink and....'

"Then you have churches and temples, I suppose, just as they have in Japan and other countries?"

"Why, of course. The Great Temple of Modernism, for example, is the biggest building in this country. Won't you go and have a look at it?"

One cloudy, warmish afternoon, Lap took me to the Great Temple. He looked very proud. It was indeed a colossal building almost ten times as large as the Nikolai Church in Tokyo—a combination of all possible styles of architecture. There was something uncanny about it—about the lofty domes and steeples pointing upward to heaven

like so many feelers. For a while we stood in front of the portico—oh, how small and insignificant we were, even compared with that portico !—gazing up at the mountainous pile that looked like a monster of preposterous size.

The interior of the Great Temple also was spacious. Many visitors, just as small and insignificant as we were, were strolling about among the Corinthian columns. Soon we met with an old kappa bent with years. Lap made a slight bow and addressed him respectfully:

"Good afternoon, sir. I'm very glad to see you in good health."

The old kappa returned the bow and replied in the same respectful manner: "Thank you, Mr. Lap. I hope you've been—"

He paused. He seemed to have noticed Lap's rotten beak. "Well, you look well, anyhow. But what has brought you here?"

"I've accompanied this gentleman. As I suppose you know, he is."

Lap talked a great deal about me. But I suspected that he was being talkative because he felt guilty about having neglected for a long time to come to the place of worship.

"And I shall be obliged, sir," he concluded, "if you will kindly show this gentleman round."

The old kappa priest greeted me with a generous smile, and then pointed quietly to a tree on the altar before us.

"I am afraid I cannot give you much information," he said. "That is the Tree of Life which we Modernists worship. You see two kinds of fruit on it, green and golden. The golden fruit is called the Fruit of Good, and the green one the Fruit of Evil...."

Soon I began to be bored, for the old kappa's explanation seemed to me but a piece of old-fashioned allegory. I pretended to be listening attentively, and cast a furtive glance now and then to the inner part of the temple.

Corinthian columns, Gothic vaults, chequered floors of Arabian fashion, a semi-Secessionist prayer-desk—all these combined to produce a strange harmony, savage and beautiful. But what attracted my attention most of all were the marble busts placed in niches on both sides of the altar. I thought I had seen them before. In fact I had. When he had finished his explanation about the Tree of Life, the old priest led us to a niche on the right, and began to tell who the bust in it was:

"This is one of our saints—St. Strindberg, who rebelled against everything. This saint is supposed to have been saved by Swedenborg's philosophy after many years of struggle and suffering. But as a matter of fact he was never saved. He was just a Life-worshipper as we are—or rather, there was no other alternative open to him. If you read his book entitled Legend, you will find his own confession that he once attempted to kill himself."

It was a gloomy story, and I looked away to the next niche, where a bust of a German with a large moustache was enshrined.

"This is Nietzsche, the poet who wrote Zarathustra. This saint looked for salvation to the superman that he himself created. But instead of being saved he went off his head, if he had not become insane, he might not have been placed among the saints...."

The old priest paused for a moment, and then led us to the third niche.

"This is Tolstoi. This saint suffered more than any other man, for, as he was of noble birth, he didn't like the curious public to know how he suffered. He tried hard to believe in Christ whom it was practically impossible to believe in, and went so far as to declare that he believed in him. But at last, in his declining years, he grew so disgusted with his tragic lies that he could no longer forgive himself for having told them. It is well known that he was sometimes seized with fear watching the beams of his study. But since he is a saint now, it is obvious that he did not commit suicide."

The bust in the fourth niche was a Japanese. When I saw it my heart naturally warmed with delight.

"This is Doppo Kunikida, a poet who knew the hidden sorrows of a poor coolie who throws himself before a rushing train. But since you are a Japanese, I suppose you don't want any more explanation. Well, then, let's go on to the fifth niche."

"This is Wagner, isn't it?" I said.

"Yes," replied the priest. "That revolutionist who was a friend of the king. In his old age St. Wagner even said grace before his meals. But of course he was a Life-worshipper rather than a Christian. Judging from his letters, he seems to have suffered so much that over and over again he was on the point of committing suicide."

By this time we were standing in front of the sixth niche.

"This saint is a French painter who was a friend of St. Strindberg's. He gave up his business career and took to painting. He left his wife and children and married a girl of Tahiti who was only thirteen or fourteen years old. He had the sailor's blood in his thick veins. But just look at his lips. Don't you notice a trace of poison—



arsenic or something? The bust in the seventh niche—but you are tired, aren't you? Well, then, come to my room and take a rest."

I was very tired. We followed the old kappa along a corridor that reeked faintly of burned incense into a little room. In a corner of that room I saw a black statue of Venus, at the foot of which was placed a bunch of wild grapes. To one who had expected a plain, unadorned monastic chamber, the whole atmosphere of the room was rather baffling. The old kappa saw how I felt, and before offering me a chair explained half regretfully:

"Please remember that our religion is Life-worship. 'Live a vigorous life' is the teaching of our God the Tree of Life. By the way, Mr. Lap, have you shown our Bible to this gentleman?"

"Er—no," replied Lap, scratching the concave top of his head. "To tell the truth, I myself seldom read it." "Well," said the old priest, smiling good-naturedly, "then perhaps you don't know. Our God created this world in the course of a single day. (The Tree of Life is a tree, but there is nothing It cannot do.) Then It created a female kappa. But the female kappa had so dull a time that she wished for a male kappa. Our God pitied her and took a bit of her brain and made a male kappa for her. And It blessed these two kappas and said: Eat, and. . . , and live a vigorous life "

These words reminded me of Tock the poet. Unfortunately Tock was an atheist just as I was. It was no wonder that I did not know of Life-worship, because I am not a kappa. But Tock was a kappa. No doubt he knew of the Tree of Life. I pitied him for disbelieving its teachings and killing himself, and interrupted the old kappa by saying so.

"Oh, you mean that unfortunate poet?" And the old priest heaved a deep sigh. "Our fortunes are determined by faith, circumstances and chance, to which you would add heredity, I suppose. Unfortunately Mr. Tock had no faith."

"I'm sure Tock envied you," I said. "So do I. As for Lap, he is still young, and—"

"I should be more optimistic," said Lap, "if only my beak were all right."

The old priest heaved another deep sigh—Moreover, a little water stood in his eyes that rested on the black Venus.

"To tell the truth— "he said, " but this is my secret. I beg you will keep it strictly to yourselves. Well, the truth is, I myself cannot believe in our God. But some day, my prayers—"

Suddenly the door of the room was flung open, and a big she-kappa sprang upon the old kappa as quick as lightning. And before either of us could get hold of her, she had thrown him down upon the floor.

"You shameless old beggar! " she cried. "Again you stole from my purse to get a drink, didn't you?"

We were in such an awkward position that we could not stay any longer with the old kappa and his wife, and about ten minutes later we were hurrying down the steps of the portico.

"No wonder the old priest can't believe in the Tree of Life," said Lap, when we had walked for some minutes in silence. I looked back at the Great Temple. It stood there as imposing as ever, stretching out numberless lofty domes and spires like so many feelers toward

the dull, cloudy sky, and shrouded in a strange mist of eeriness like a mirage hanging over a desert....

## XV

About a week later, Doctor Chuck told me of a strange rumour that the house where Tock the poet had lived was haunted. By that time the she-kappa had moved out, and the house was now a photographer's studio. Chuck told me that in every photograph taken in that studio, a dim image of the dead poet could be seen behind the picture. But the doctor was a materialist, and did not believe in the immortality of the soul. Even when he himself told me that the house was haunted, he added with a malignant smile on his face:

"The soul seems to be a material being just as the body is."

I don't believe in ghosts either. But as I had a friendly feeling towards Tock the poet, I ran to a book-seller's at once and bought some newspapers and magazines containing the accounts and photographs of the ghost. There were lots of pictures—he-kappas and she-kappas, young and old—and behind each of them I certainly did see, though indistinctly, the image of a kappa who looked somewhat like Tock. But what was more remarkable was the articles, especially the report of the Society for Psychical Research. I translated it word for word into Japanese, as correctly as I could, the outline of which will be given below. The notes in brackets are mine....

## REPORT ON THE GHOST OF

MR. TOOK, POET  
The Journal of Psychical Research  
No. 8274

The Society for Psychical Research held an extraordinary inquiry meeting at No. 251,— St., formerly the residence of Mr. Tock, poet, who committed suicide some time ago, but at present the studio of Mr. —, photographer. The members present were as follows: (Names omitted.)

We seventeen members of the Society for Psychical Research, headed by Mr. Peck, President, and accompanied by Mrs. Hop, our most trusted medium, met in a room of the above-mentioned studio at 10: 30 a.m., September 17th. As soon as she entered the studio Mrs. Hop felt a spiritual atmosphere, and, with convulsions all over her body, vomited several times. She said that this was because the spiritual atmosphere of Mr. Tock contained nicotine as the result of his indulgence in strong tobacco.

We members of the Society and Mrs. Hop sat silent at a round table. In three minutes and twenty-five seconds Mrs. Hop fell into a trance quite suddenly and was possessed by Mr. Tock's spirit. We started to converse with the spirit who had possessed her in the order of our years. The questions and answers were as follows:

*Q.* Why do you appear?

*A.* Because I want to know what fame I have made after death.

*Q.* Do you—well, do you departed spirits care for fame even after death?

*A.* Yes. At least I do. But a Japanese poet whose spirit I met with some time ago had scorn for post-mortem reputation.

*Q.* Can you tell us the name of the poet?

*A.* Unfortunately it has quite escaped my memory. All I can remember is one of his short poems in seventeen syllables, which he seemed to like very much.

*Q.* How does it go?

*A.* Furu-ike ya,

Kawazu tobi-komu

Mizu no Oto! [1](#)

*Q.* Do you think it is a good poem?

*A.* I don't think it is a bad one. But it would have been a masterpiece if the poet had substituted a kappa for the frog.

*Q.* Why do you think so?

*A.* Because we kappas are very eager to find the kappa in any work of art.

Here President Peck called our attention to the fact that we were not having a joint review meeting, but an extraordinary inquiry meeting of the Society for Psychical Research.

*Q.* How do you spirits live?

*A.* Just as you do.

*Q.* Do you regret having committed suicide?

*A.* Not exactly. If I should get tired of spiritual life, I will come

back again to this world of yours by killing my spiritual self with a pistol.

*Q.* Is it easy for a spirit to commit suicide and come again into this world?

Mr. Tock's spirit met the question with another question, which would have seemed quite like him to those who had known the poet:

*A.* Is it easy for you to do away with yourselves?

*Q.* Are you spirits immortal?

*A.* There are so many different opinions about our immortality that it is almost impossible to tell which is the right one. Please don't forget that among us too there are Christians, Mohammedans, Parsees, etc.

*Q.* What do you believe in?

*A.* I am always a nothingarian.

*Q.* But at least you don't doubt the existence of the spirit, do you?

*A.* I'm not so sure as you are.

*Q.* How many friends have you got?

*A.* I have my friends in all ages and climates, probably not less than three hundred. The most famous among them are Kleist, Mainlander, Weininger,....

*Q.* Are all your friends suicides?

*A.* Not all. Montaigne, for example, who defended suicide, is one of my respected friends. But I don't keep company with such a fellow as Schopenhauer—a pessimist who did not kill himself.

*Q.* How is Schopenhauer getting along? *A.* He has established Spiritual Pessimism, and is now discussing the question whether it is right or wrong to kill one's spiritual self and come into life once more. But having learned that cholera is one of the diseases caused by bacteria, he seems to be feeling very much relieved.

We questioned him, one after another, about the spirits of Napoleon, Confucius, Dostoievski, Darwin, Cleopatra, Buddha Demosthenes, Dante, Sen-no-Rikyū [2](#), etc. But to our regret, Mr. Tack did not give sufficient information. Instead, he asked several questions about his personal affairs.

*Q.* Now tell me about my reputation after death.

*A.* A certain critic said that you were one of the minor poets.

*Q.* I suppose he is one of those who have a grudge against me because I didn't present them with my books of poems. Has the complete collection of my poems been published yet?

*A.* It has been published, but it seems to be selling very slowly.

*Q.* In three hundred years, when my poems. are out of copyright, everyone will buy a copy.

What has become of my female friend who lived with me?



*A.* She has married Mr. Lack, the bookseller.

*Q.* Poor thing ! I am afraid she doesn't know that Lack has a glass eye. What about my child?

*A.* He is in the National Orphan Asylum, I hear. Mr. Tock was silent for a while, and then resumed his questions:

*Q.* What about my house?

*A.* It has become a photographer's studio. *Q.* What about my writing-desk?

*A.* No one knows anything about it.

*Q.* I had a bundle of treasured letters in one of the drawers—but fortunately you are too busy to be curious about them. Well, I think I must be going now. Dusk is gathering slowly in the world of spirits. Good-bye, friends. Good-bye, my honest friends !

With these words, Mrs. Hop suddenly came to herself. We seventeen members of the Society swear before God to the authenticity of the foregoing questions and answers.

P.S. We paid for the service of Mrs. Hop, our trusted medium, according to the daily allowance she had once got from the stage.

## XVI

This and other articles on Tock's ghost threw me into a melancholy mood, and I no longer enjoyed life in that country. So I decided to come back to this country and live among my fellow human beings. But I did not know where the pit into which I had fallen was. How I walked about in search of it! Then one day Bag the fisher-kappa told me that there lived an old kappa in the suburbs of the city, enjoying a quiet life, with a flute and books for companions. I went there without delay, hoping that he might be able to tell me the way out of that country. But I did not find any old kappa in the hermitage, which was a very small house. Instead, a tender-headed child kappa, apparently not more than eleven or twelve years old, was playing a flute with an air of serene contentment. I wondered whether I had come to the wrong place. But on asking his name I found that he was the very old kappa whom Bag had spoken of.

"But you look like a child—"

"You don't know anything about me yet. By some fortune or other, I was grey-haired when I came out of my mother's womb. I grew younger and younger, and now I am only a child as you see. But if you ask my age, well, may be I'm about one hundred and fifteen or sixteen, assuming that I was only sixty years old when I was born."

I looked round the room. There was something about the plain chairs and tables, it seemed to me, that suggested the purity and

happiness of a saintly life.

"You are happier than any other kappa, I suppose?"

"Well, may be I am. I was old in my youth, and am young in my old age. So I'm not so covetous as old kappas generally are, nor am I a slave to lust like young kappas. Anyway, my life has been at least peaceful, if not happy."

"I see. Surely that would bring one peace of mind."

"Not always. One cannot enjoy a peaceful life without health and wealth. Fortunately I've always been in good health, and inherited sufficient means to support myself all my life. But what has contributed most to my happiness is, I think, that by good fortune I was already an old kappa when I was born."

I talked for a while about Tock who had committed suicide, and about Gael who saw the doctor every day. But somehow the old kappa did not seem to take much interest in those subjects.

"Then you have no positive desire to live, like other kappas, have you?"

Gazing at my face, the old kappa replied calmly: "Well, I left my mother's womb like any other kappa after I had given my answer in the affirmative to my father's question whether or not I wanted to be born into this country."

"But I fell into this country by mere accident. Would you kindly tell me the way out?"

"There's only one way out."

"Well?"

"And that is the way you came here by." There was something in that answer that made my blood run cold.

"But I can't find it."

The old kappa stared at me with his bright, youthful eyes. Then he stood up slowly, went to a corner of the room, and pulled a rope that hung from the ceiling and opened a skylight which I had not noticed before. And through that round skylight I could see branches of pine-trees and cypresses, and beyond them a clear, bright sky. I could also see Mr. Yarigadake thrusting its peak into the blue sky like an enormous arrowhead. I jumped for joy like a boy who had caught sight of a flying airplane.

"Now, you can go out by that skylight," said the old kappa, pointing to the rope, which was not an ordinary rope as it had seemed to be, but a sort of rope-ladder.

"Thank you very much. Good-bye!"

"Just a minute, young man. Are you sure you'll never regret having left this country? "

"Oh, yes. I shall never regret it."

And the next moment I was scaling up the rope-ladder, farther and farther away from the concave head of the old kappa.

## XVII

When I returned from the land of kappas, I was greatly upset for some time by the smell of men. Compared with human beings, kappas are awfully clean. Moreover the human head struck me as being a very uncanny spectacle. I am afraid you don't see how I felt about it, because you have never lived among the concave-headed kappas. Besides, the human nose—I have not much to say against the eye and the mouth—but the human nose certainly has something about it that inspires you with fear.

For some time I took great pains to keep human beings away, but little by little I got used to them, and in the course of half a year or so I began to go anywhere and see anybody. But one thing that embarrassed me very much was that I often dropped into the kappa language during the conversation, as for example:

"Will you be at home tomorrow?"

*"Qua."*

"What?"

"Oh, I shall be at home."

Then, about a year after my return from the land of kappas, I failed in an enterprise and—

(Here Dr. S— interrupted Patient No. 23 by saying that he had better drop the subject. According to the doctor, he gets so wild whenever he touches upon it that even the nurses cannot keep him

under control.)

Very well, then I'll not say any more about it. Anyway, I made a mess of it, and that caused me to wish to return to the land of kappas. Yes, I wished to return,' not to go.' For at that time I had a longing for that country as if it had been my dear old home.

I slipped out of my house, and was just about to get into a train on the OM Line, when unfortunately I was caught by a policeman, who brought me to this hospital. For some time after I came here I kept on thinking about kappas and their country. How was Chuck the doctor-kappa getting along? Was Mag the philosopher meditating on something or other, as he had always been, under that seven-color glass lantern? Above all, how was Lap, the rotten-beaked student fellow who had been my best chum....

One cloudy afternoon like this, when I was absorbed in these recollections, I was startled to see a kappa bobbing his head just in front of me. It was Bag the fisher-kappa. As soon as I recovered myself—well, I don't remember whether I wept or laughed, but certainly I was deeply moved to find myself speaking again in the kappa language after so long a time.

"Hello, Bag, what has brought you here? "

"Your illness, sir. How do you feel, sir?"

"How did you know?"

"The radio, sir."

And Bag smiled triumphantly.

"I see. But I wonder how you managed to come at all."

"Oh, it's a soft job. All the waterways in Tokyo are nothing but highways to kappas."

I remembered the fact which I had quite forgotten that kappas are amphibians like frogs.

"But there's no waterway hereabout."

"I came through the water-pipe. And then, just opening the fire-plug—"

"You opened the fire-plug?"

"Yes, sir. Have you forgotten that there are machinists among kappas too?"

After that many kappas came to see me every two or three days. Dr. S— says that I am suffering from dementia praecox, but according to Chuck the doctor-kappa I am quite all right. He says—an insulting remark, to be sure—but he says that it is you, and Dr. S—, and people like you, that are victims of dementia praecox.

Since even Chuck the doctor came to see me, it was of course natural that Lap the student and Mag the philosopher followed suit. But no kappa turns up during the daytime except Bag the fisher-kappa. It is at night—mostly on moonlight nights—that two or three of them come together. Last night again I had a chat in the moonlight with Gael, president of the glass manufacturing company, and Mag the philosopher. Besides, Craback the musician obliged me with a tune on the violin. Look at the bunch of black lilies on that desk over there. Craback brought them last night—

(I looked back, but of course there was nothing to be seen on the desk.)

And this book is a gift from Mag the philosopher who brought it all the way to me. Just read the first poem. Oh, I'm sorry. You don't understand the kappa language. Well, I'll read it for you in Japanese. This is a volume from Tock's complete works published recently—

(Patient No. 23 opened an old telephone directory, and began to read the following poem in a loud voice:)

Among bamboos and flowering dates,  
Buddha's long been fast asleep.

And with the withe red wayside fig,  
Christ is also dead, it seems.

But rest we must, actors all,  
Even right before the scenes.

(And the back of the finely painted scenes  
Is with patches and patches of dirty canvas patched !)

But I am not so pessimistic as this poet. So long as my kappa friends come to see me now and then—Oh, I've omitted to tell you one thing. You remember my friend Judge Pep, don't you? That kappa went off his head altogether after he had been dismissed from office. I hear that he is now in a lunatic asylum in the country of kappas. I should like very much to go and see him, if Dr. S----would permit me to do so.....

Feb. 11, 1927.



# NOTES

[1.](#) One of the best and best-known haiku (a form of Japanese poetry usually of seventeen syllables) composed by Basho (1644-1694). Here are some English translations:

The old pond, aye! and the sound of a frog leaping into the water.

—Chamberlain.

A lonely pond in age-old stillness sleeps....

Apart, unstirred by sound or motion.... till

Suddenly into it a lithe frog leaps.

—Page.

An old-time pond, from off whose shadowed depth

Is heard the splash where some lithe frog leaps in.

—Walsh.

The old pond!

A frog leapt into—

List, the water sound!

—Yone Noguchi.

Into the calm old lake

A frog with flying leap goes plop!

The peaceful hush to break.

—Porter.

Into an old pond

A frog took a sudden plunge,

Then is heard a splash.

—Nitobe.

These are mostly incomplete paraphrases. Mr. Miyamori refuses to take any of them and gives a word-for-word rendering:

The old pond !

A frog plunged—

The splash!

—Miyamori.

It is very difficult, almost impossible, to translate a haiku into any other language. It leaves too much unsaid, and what is left unsaid forms in most cases the main part of the poem. A non-Japanese cannot appreciate this form of poetry without intimate knowledge of the language, life and culture, tastes and emotional reactions of the Japanese people.

—S. S.

[2.](#) Sen-no-Rikra: A well-known votary of the tea cult, who killed himself in 1591 at the age of 69 by order of Hideyoshi, the then all-powerful ruler of Japan.

—S. S.

# KAPPA

